

## CHAPTER 4 DISCIPLINE

[Prior to 5/23/84, IAC, "Disciplinary Proceedings" appeared as Ch 8]  
[Prior to 5/23/84, "Licensure to Practice—Licensed Practical Nurse" appeared as Ch 4. See Ch 3.]  
[Prior to 8/26/87, Nursing Board[590] Ch 4]

**655—4.1(17A,147,152,272C) Board authority.** The board of nursing may discipline a registered nurse, a licensed practical nurse or an advanced registered nurse practitioner for any grounds stated in Iowa Code chapters 147, 152 and 272C, or rules promulgated thereunder.

**655—4.2(17A,147,152,272C) Complaints and investigations.** Complaints are allegations of wrongful acts or omissions relating to the ethical or professional conduct of a licensee.

**4.2(1)** In accordance with Iowa Code section 272C.3(1) "c," the board shall investigate or review, upon written complaint or upon its own motion pursuant to other information received by the board, alleged acts or omissions which the board reasonably believes constitute cause for licensee discipline.

**4.2(2)** The executive director or authorized designee shall investigate complaints in order to determine the probability that a violation of law or rule has occurred.

**655—4.3(17A,147,152,272C) Investigatory subpoena powers.** The board shall have the authority to issue an investigatory subpoena in accordance with the provisions of Iowa Code section 17A.13.

**4.3(1)** A subpoena which requires production of real evidence that is necessary to an investigation may be issued upon the authority of the executive director or a designee.

**4.3(2)** In the event obedience to a subpoena is refused, the requesting party may petition the district court for enforcement.

**655—4.4(17A,147,152,272C) Board action.** The board shall review investigative conclusions and do one of the following:

1. Close the investigative case without action.
2. Request further inquiry.
3. Appoint a peer review committee to assist with the investigation.
4. Determine the existence of sufficient probable cause and order a disciplinary hearing to be held in compliance with Iowa Code section 272C.6.

**655—4.5(17A,147,152,272C) Peer review committee.** The board may establish a peer review committee to assist with the investigative process when deemed necessary.

**4.5(1)** The committee shall determine if the conduct of the licensee conforms to minimum standards of acceptable and prevailing practice of nursing and submit a report of its findings to the board.

**4.5(2)** The board shall review the committee's findings and proceed with action available under rule 4.4(17A,147,152,272C).

**4.5(3)** The peer review committee shall observe the confidentiality requirements imposed by Iowa Code section 272C.6.

**655—4.6(17A,147,152,272C) Grounds for discipline.** The board may discipline a licensee for wrongful acts or omissions related to nursing practice, licensure or unprofessional conduct and may revoke, suspend or deny issuance or renewal of licensure upon receipt of a certificate of noncompliance pursuant to Iowa Code chapters 252J and 261.

**4.6(1)** In accordance with Iowa Code section 147.55(1), behavior which constitutes fraud in procuring a license may include, but need not be limited to, the following:

- a. Falsification of the application, credentials, or records submitted to the board for licensure as a registered nurse, licensed practical nurse, or registration as an advanced registered nurse practitioner.
- b. Fraud, misrepresentation, or deceit in taking the licensing examination or in obtaining a license as a registered nurse, licensed practical nurse, or registration as an advanced registered nurse practitioner.
- c. Impersonating any applicant in any examination for licensure as a registered nurse or licensed practical nurse.

**4.6(2)** In accordance with Iowa Code section 147.55(2), professional incompetency may include, but need not be limited to, the following:

- a. Lack of knowledge, skill, or ability to discharge professional obligations within the scope of nursing practice.
- b. Deviation by the licensee from the standards of learning, education, or skill ordinarily possessed and applied by other nurses in the state of Iowa acting in the same or similar circumstances.
- c. Willful or repeated departure from or failure to conform to the minimum standards of acceptable and prevailing practice of nursing in the state of Iowa.
- d. Willful or repeated failure to practice nursing with reasonable skill and safety.
- e. Willful or repeated failure to practice within the scope of current licensure or level of preparation.
- f. Failure to meet the standards as defined in 655—Chapter 6, Iowa Administrative Code.
- g. Failure to comply with the requirements of Iowa Code chapter 139C.

**4.6(3)** In accordance with Iowa Code section 147.55(3), behavior (i.e., acts, knowledge, and practices) which constitutes knowingly making misleading, deceptive, untrue, or fraudulent representations in the practice of a profession may include, but need not be limited to, the following:

- a. Oral or written misrepresentation relating to degrees, credentials, licensure status, records and applications.
- b. Falsifying records related to nursing practice or knowingly permitting the use of falsified information in those records.

**4.6(4)** In accordance with Iowa Code section 147.55(3), behavior (i.e., acts, knowledge, and practices) which constitutes unethical conduct may include, but need not be limited to, the following:

- a. Performing nursing services beyond the authorized scope of practice for which the individual is licensed or prepared.
- b. Allowing another person to use one's nursing license for any purpose.
- c. Improper delegation of nursing services, functions, or responsibilities.
- d. Committing an act or omission which may adversely affect the physical or psychosocial welfare of the patient or client.
- e. Committing an act which causes physical, emotional, or financial injury to the patient or client.
- f. Engaging in sexual conduct, including inappropriate physical contact or any behavior that is seductive, demeaning, or exploitative, with regard to a patient or client.

- g. Failing to report to, or leaving, a nursing assignment without properly notifying appropriate supervisory personnel and ensuring the safety and welfare of the patient or client.
- h. Violating the confidentiality or privacy rights of the patient or client.
- i. Discriminating against a patient or client because of age, sex, race, creed, illness, economic or social status.
- j. Failing to assess, accurately document, or report the status of a patient or client.
- k. Misappropriating medications, property, supplies, or equipment of the patient, client, or agency.
- l. Fraudulently or inappropriately using or permitting the use of prescription blanks or obtaining prescription medications under false pretenses.
- m. Practicing nursing while under the influence of alcohol, illicit drugs, or while impaired by the use of legitimately prescribed pharmacological agents or medications.
- n. Being involved in the unauthorized manufacture, possession, distribution, or use of a controlled substance.
- o. Conviction of a misdemeanor or felony related to the practice of nursing.
- p. Failing to report suspected wrongful acts or omissions committed by a licensee of this board.

**655—4.7(17A,147,152,272C) Sanctions.** A sanction is a disciplinary action by the board which resolves a contested case. The board may impose one or more of the following:

1. Revocation.
2. Suspension.
3. Probation.
4. Civil penalty. A fine may be imposed in accordance with Iowa Code section 272C.3(2) “e.” Assessment of a fine shall be specified in the order and may not exceed a maximum amount of \$1000. Fines may be incurred for:
  - Practicing without an active license: \$50 for each calendar month or part thereof, beginning on the date that a license enters delinquent status.
  - Obtaining a license by falsification of continuing education records: \$50 for each contact hour falsified.
  - Violating rule 4.6(17A,147,152,272C): an amount deemed appropriate.
5. Citation and warning.

**655—4.8(17A,147,152,272C) Panel of specialists.** The board may appoint a panel of nurses who are specialists to ascertain the facts of a case pursuant to Iowa Code section 272C.6(2). The board chairperson or designee shall appoint the presiding officer.

**4.8(1)** The executive director shall set the date, time, and location of the hearing and make proper notification to all parties.

**4.8(2)** The panel of specialists shall:

- a. Enter into the record the names of the presiding officer, members of the panel, the parties and their representatives.
- b. Enter into the record the notice and evidence of service, order for hearing, statement of charges, answer, if available, and any other pleadings, motions or orders.
- c. Receive opening statements from the parties.
- d. Receive evidence, in accordance with Iowa Code section 17A.14, on behalf of the state of Iowa and on behalf of the licensee.

- e.* Question the witnesses.
- f.* Receive closing statements from the parties.
- g.* Determine the findings of fact by a majority vote and make a written report of its findings to the board within a reasonable period.

**655—4.9(17A,147,152,272C) Informal settlement.** Pursuant to the provisions of Iowa Code sections 17A.12 and 272C.3, the board may consider resolution of disciplinary matters through informal settlement prior to commencement of contested case proceedings. The executive director or a designee may negotiate with the licensee regarding a proposed disposition of the controversy. Upon consent of both parties, the board will review the proposal for action.

**655—4.10(17A,147,152,272C) Voluntary surrender.** A voluntary surrender of licensure may be submitted to the board as resolution of a contested case or in lieu of continued compliance with a disciplinary decision of the board.

**655—4.11(17A,147,152,272C) Application for reinstatement.** Any person whose license to practice nursing has been suspended, revoked, or voluntarily surrendered may apply to the board for reinstatement in accordance with the terms and conditions of the order.

**4.11(1)** If the license was voluntarily surrendered, or if the order for suspension or revocation did not establish terms and conditions for reinstatement, an initial application may not be made until one year has elapsed from the date of the order.

**4.11(2)** The application shall allege facts and circumstances which will enable the board to determine that the basis for the sanction or voluntary surrender no longer exists, and that it is in the public interest to reinstate the license. The burden of proof to establish these facts shall rest with the petitioner.

**4.11(3)** The hearing in an application for reinstatement is a contested case in the meaning of Iowa Code section 17A.12.

**4.11(4)** The order to grant or deny reinstatement shall incorporate findings of fact and conclusions of law. If reinstatement is granted, terms and conditions of licensure may be imposed.

**655—4.12(17A,147,152,272C) Licensee review committee.** In accordance with the provisions of Iowa Code section 272C.3(1)“k,” the board shall appoint a licensee review committee for the purpose of evaluating and monitoring licensees who self-report physical or mental impairments. The committee shall be comprised of the executive director or designee, a representative with chemical dependency or mental health treatment experience, and a recovering nurse with at least five consecutive years of sobriety.

**4.12(1)** Eligibility for referral to the committee shall be determined by the executive director in accordance with the following criteria:

- a.* The licensee must self-report the impairment.
- b.* The licensee must submit an evaluation summary, diagnosis, or other evidence which supports a determination that an impairment exists.
- c.* There must be no indication of practice-related problems.
- d.* There must be no documented violation of law or board rules related to impairment-associated behaviors.
- e.* There must be no record of prior board sanction for impairment-related problems.

**4.12(2)** The committee shall meet as necessary in order to interview potential participants, develop consensual agreements for new referrals, review licensee compliance, and determine eligibility for continued monitoring.

**4.12(3)** Conditions placed upon the licensee and the duration of the monitoring period shall be established by the committee and communicated to the licensed individual in writing.

**4.12(4)** The licensee must consent to the conditions proposed by the review committee in order to participate in this program.

**4.12(5)** Failure to comply with the provisions of the agreement shall require the committee to make immediate referral of the matter to the board for possible disciplinary action.

**4.12(6)** Information in possession of the licensee review committee shall be subject to the confidentiality requirements of Iowa Code section 272C.6.

**655—4.13(17A,147,152,272C) Contested case proceedings.** The following rules apply to board activities which are initiated upon determination of probable cause and result in the issuance of a notice of hearing.

**655—4.14(17A) Definitions.** Except where otherwise specifically defined by law:

*“Contested case”* means a proceeding defined by Iowa Code section 17A.2(5) and includes any matter defined as a no factual dispute contested case under 1998 Iowa Acts, chapter 1202, section 14.

*“Issuance”* means the date of mailing of a decision or order or date of delivery if service is by other means, unless another date is specified in the order.

*“Party”* means each person or agency named or admitted as a party or properly seeking and entitled as of right to be admitted as a party.

*“Presiding officer”* means the chairperson of the board or designee.

*“Proposed decision”* means the presiding officer’s recommended findings of fact, conclusions of law, decision, and order in a contested case in which the board of nursing did not preside.

**655—4.15(17A) Time requirements.**

**4.15(1)** Time shall be computed as provided in Iowa Code subsection 4.1(34).

**4.15(2)** For good cause, the presiding officer may extend or shorten the time to take any action, except as precluded by statute. Except for good cause stated in the record, before extending or shortening the time to take any action, the presiding officer shall afford all parties an opportunity to be heard or to file written arguments.

**655—4.16(17A) Notice of hearing.** The board shall issue an order, notice of hearing, and statement of charges following its determination of probable cause pursuant to Iowa Code section 17A.12(2). Delivery of the notice of hearing constitutes the commencement of the contested case proceeding.

**4.16(1)** The date, time, and location of the hearing shall be set by the chairperson or the executive director. The licensee shall be notified at least 30 days prior to the scheduled hearing.

**4.16(2)** Notification shall be in writing delivered either by personal service as in civil actions or by certified mail with return receipt requested. When the licensee cannot be located:

*a.* An affidavit shall be prepared outlining the measures taken to attempt service and shall become a part of the file when a notice cannot be delivered by personal service or certified mail return receipt requested.

*b.* Notice of hearing shall be published once each week for three consecutive weeks in a newspaper of general circulation, published or circulated in the county of last-known residence of the licensee. The newspaper will be selected by the executive director or a designee. The first notice of hearing shall be published at least 30 days prior to the scheduled hearing.

**655—4.17(17A) Presiding officer.** Disciplinary hearings shall be conducted by the board pursuant to Iowa Code section 272C.6.

**4.17(1)** The chairperson of the board shall designate the presiding officer in accordance with the provisions of section 17A.11. For nondisciplinary proceedings, any party who wishes to request that the presiding officer assigned to render a proposed decision be an administrative law judge employed by the department of inspections and appeals must file a written request within 20 days after service of a notice of hearing.

**4.17(2)** The executive director may deny the request upon a finding that one or more of the following apply:

*a.* Neither the agency nor any officer of the agency under whose authority the contested case is to take place is a named party to the proceeding or a real party in interest to that proceeding.

*b.* There is a compelling need to expedite issuance of a final decision in order to protect the public health, safety, or welfare.

*c.* The case involves significant policy issues of first impression that are inextricably intertwined with the factual issues presented.

*d.* The demeanor of the witness is likely to be dispositive in resolving the disputed factual issues.

*e.* Funds are unavailable to pay the costs of an administrative law judge and an interagency appeal.

*f.* The request was not timely filed.

*g.* The request is not consistent with a specified statute.

*h.* The request would not conform to the disciplinary hearing provision of Iowa Code section 272C.6.

**4.17(3)** The agency (or its designee) shall issue a written ruling specifying the grounds for its decision within 20 days after a request for an administrative law judge is filed.

**4.17(4)** All rulings by an administrative law judge are subject to appeal to the agency. A party must seek any available intra-agency appeal in order to exhaust adequate administrative remedies.

**4.17(5)** Unless otherwise provided by law, agency heads and members of multimembered agency heads, when reviewing a proposed decision upon intra-agency appeal, shall have the powers of and shall comply with the provisions of this chapter which apply to presiding officers.

**655—4.18(17A) Waiver of procedures.** Unless otherwise precluded by law, the parties in a contested case proceeding may waive any provision of this chapter. However, the agency in its discretion may refuse to give effect to such a waiver when it deems the waiver to be inconsistent with the public interest.

**655—4.19(17A) Telephone proceedings.** The presiding officer may resolve preliminary procedural motions by telephone conference in which all parties have an opportunity to participate. Other telephone proceedings may be held with the consent of all parties. The presiding officer will determine the location of the parties and witnesses for telephone hearings. The convenience of the witnesses or parties, as well as the nature of the case, will be considered when location is chosen.

**655—4.20(17A) Disqualification.**

**4.20(1)** A presiding officer or other person shall withdraw from participation in the making of any proposed or final decision in a contested case if that person:

- a. Has a personal bias or prejudice concerning a party or a representative of a party;
- b. Has personally investigated, prosecuted or advocated in connection with that case, the specific controversy underlying that case, another pending factually related contested case, or a pending factually related controversy that may culminate in a contested case involving the same parties;
- c. Is subject to the authority, direction or discretion of any person who has personally investigated, prosecuted or advocated in connection with that contested case, the specific controversy underlying that contested case, or a pending factually related contested case or controversy involving the same parties;
- d. Has acted as counsel to any person who is a private party to that proceeding within the past two years;
- e. Has a personal financial interest in the outcome of the case or any other significant personal interest that could be substantially affected by the outcome of the case;
- f. Has a spouse or relative within the third degree of relationship that: (1) is a party to the case, or an officer, director or trustee of a party; (2) is a lawyer in the case; (3) is known to have an interest that could be substantially affected by the outcome of the case; or (4) is likely to be a material witness in the case; or
- g. Has any other legally sufficient cause to withdraw from participation in the decision making in that case.

**4.20(2)** The term “personally investigated” means taking affirmative steps to interview witnesses directly or to obtain documents or other information directly. The term “personally investigated” does not include general direction and supervision of assigned investigators, unsolicited receipt of information which is relayed to assigned investigators, review of another person’s investigative work product in the course of determining whether there is probable cause to initiate a proceeding or exposure to factual information while performing other agency functions, including fact gathering for purposes other than investigation or the matter which culminates in a contested case. Factual information relevant to the merits of a contested case received by a person who later serves as presiding officer in that case shall be disclosed if required by Iowa Code section 17A.17 as amended by 1998 Iowa Acts, chapter 1202, section 19, and subrules 4.20(3) and 4.32(9).

**4.20(3)** In a situation where a presiding officer or other person knows of information which might reasonably be deemed to be a basis for disqualification and decides voluntary withdrawal is unnecessary, that person shall submit the relevant information for the record by affidavit and shall provide for the record a statement of the reasons for the determination that withdrawal is unnecessary.

**4.20(4)** If a party asserts disqualification on any appropriate ground, including those listed in subrule 4.20(1), the party shall file a motion supported by an affidavit pursuant to Iowa Code section 17A.17 as amended by 1998 Iowa Acts, chapter 1202, section 19. The motion must be filed as soon as practicable after the reason alleged in the motion becomes known to the party. If, during the course of the hearing, a party first becomes aware of evidence of bias or other grounds for disqualification, the party may move for disqualification but must establish the grounds by the introduction of evidence into the record.

If the presiding officer determines that disqualification is appropriate, the presiding officer or other person shall withdraw. If the presiding officer determines that withdrawal is not required, the presiding officer shall enter an order to that effect. A party asserting disqualification may seek an interlocutory appeal under rule 4.34(17A).

**655—4.21(17A) Consolidation—severance.**

**4.21(1) Consolidation.** The presiding officer may consolidate any or all matters at issue in two or more contested case proceedings where: (a) the matters at issue involve common parties or common questions of fact or law; (b) consolidation would expedite and simplify consideration of the issues involved; and (c) consolidation would not adversely affect the rights of any of the parties to those proceedings.

**4.21(2) Severance.** The presiding officer may, for good cause shown, order any contested case proceedings or portions thereof severed.

**655—4.22(17A) Pleadings.**

**4.22(1)** Pleadings may be required by rule, by notice of hearing, or by order of the presiding officer.

**4.22(2) Petition.**

*a.* Any petition required in a contested case proceeding shall be filed within 20 days of delivery of the notice of hearing or subsequent order of the presiding officer, unless otherwise ordered.

*b.* A petition shall state in separately numbered paragraphs the following:

- (1) The persons or entities on whose behalf the petition is filed;
- (2) The particular provisions of statutes and rules involved;
- (3) The relief demanded and the facts and laws relied upon for such relief; and
- (4) The name, address and telephone number of the petitioner and the petitioner's attorney.

**4.22(3) Answer.** An answer may be filed within 20 days of service of the petition. A party may move to dismiss or apply for a more definite and detailed statement when appropriate.

An answer shall show on whose behalf it is filed and specifically admit, deny, or otherwise answer all material allegations of the pleading to which it responds. It shall state any facts deemed to show an affirmative defense and contain as many additional defenses as the pleader may claim.

An answer shall state the name, address and telephone number of the person filing the answer, the person or entity on whose behalf it is filed, and the attorney representing that person.

Any allegation in the petition not denied in the answer is considered admitted. The presiding officer may refuse to consider any defense not raised in the answer which could have been raised on the basis of facts known when the answer was filed if any party would be prejudiced.

**655—4.23(17A) Service and filing of pleadings and other papers.**

**4.23(1) When service required.** Except where otherwise provided by law, every pleading, motion, document, or other paper filed in a contested case proceeding and every paper relating to discovery in such a proceeding shall be served upon each of the parties of record to the proceeding, including the person designated as advocate or prosecutor for the state or the agency. Except for the original notice of hearing and an application for rehearing as provided in Iowa Code section 17A.16(2), the party filing a document is responsible for service on all parties.

**4.23(2) Service—how made.** Service upon a party represented by an attorney shall be made upon the attorney unless otherwise ordered. Service is made by delivery or by mailing a copy to the person's last-known address. Service by mail is complete upon mailing, except where otherwise specifically provided by statute, rule, or order.

**4.23(3) Filing—when required.** After the notice of hearing, all pleadings, motions, documents or other papers in a contested case proceeding shall be filed with the board.



**4.23(4) Filing—when made.** Except where otherwise provided by law, a document is deemed filed at the time it is delivered to the board office, delivered to an established courier service for immediate delivery to that office, or mailed by first-class mail or state interoffice mail to that office, so long as there is proof of mailing.

**4.23(5) Proof of mailing.** Proof of mailing includes either: a legible United States Postal Service postmark on the envelope, a certificate of service, a notarized affidavit, or a certification in substantially the following form:

I certify under penalty of perjury and pursuant to the laws of Iowa that, on (date of mailing), I mailed copies of (describe document) addressed to the (agency office and address) and to the names and addresses of the parties listed below by depositing the same in the United States mail or state interoffice mail.

(Date)

(Signature)

**655—4.24(17A) Discovery.**

**4.24(1)** Discovery procedures applicable in civil actions are applicable in contested cases. Unless lengthened or shortened by these rules or by order of the presiding officer, time periods for compliance with discovery shall be as provided in the Iowa Rules of Civil Procedure.

**4.24(2)** Any motion relating to discovery shall allege that the moving party has previously made a good-faith attempt to resolve the discovery issues involved with the opposing party. Motions in regard to discovery shall be ruled upon by the presiding officer. Opposing parties shall be afforded the opportunity to respond within ten days of the filing of the motion unless the time is shortened as provided in subrule 4.24(1). The presiding officer may rule on the basis of the written motion and any response, or may order argument on the motion.

**4.24(3)** Evidence obtained in discovery may be used in the contested case proceeding if that evidence would otherwise be admissible in that proceeding.

**655—4.25(17A) Subpoenas.**

**4.25(1) Issuance.**

*a.* An agency subpoena shall be issued to a party on request. Such a request must be in writing. In the absence of good cause for permitting later action, a request for a subpoena must be received at least three days before the scheduled hearing. The request shall include the name, address, and telephone number of the requesting party.

*b.* Except to the extent otherwise provided by law, parties are responsible for service of their own subpoenas and payment of witness fees and mileage expenses.

**4.25(2) Motion to quash or modify.** The presiding officer may quash or modify a subpoena for any lawful reason upon motion in accordance with the Iowa Rules of Civil Procedure. A motion to quash or modify a subpoena shall be set for argument promptly.

**655—4.26(17A) Motions.**

**4.26(1)** No technical form for motions is required. However, prehearing motions must be in writing, state the grounds for relief, and state the relief sought.

**4.26(2)** Any party may file a written response to a motion within ten days after the motion is served, unless the time period is extended or shortened by rules of the agency or the presiding officer. The presiding officer may consider a failure to respond within the required time period in ruling on a motion.

**4.26(3)** The presiding officer may schedule oral argument on any motion.

**4.26(4)** Motions pertaining to the hearing must be filed and served at least ten days prior to the date of hearing unless there is good cause for permitting later action or the time for such action is lengthened or shortened by rule of the agency or an order of the presiding officer.

**655—4.27(17A) Prehearing conference.**

**4.27(1)** Any party may request a prehearing conference. A written request for prehearing conference or an order for prehearing conference on the presiding officer's own motion shall be filed not less than seven days prior to the hearing date. A prehearing conference shall be scheduled not less than three business days prior to the hearing date.

Written notice of the prehearing conference shall be given by the board office to all parties. For good cause the presiding officer may permit variances from this rule.

**4.27(2)** Each party shall bring to the prehearing conference:

*a.* A final list of witnesses the party anticipates will testify at hearing. Witnesses not listed may be excluded from testifying unless there was good cause for the failure to include their names;

*b.* A final list of exhibits which the party anticipates will be introduced at hearing. Exhibits other than rebuttal exhibits that are not listed may be excluded from admission into evidence unless there was good cause for the failure to include them; and

*c.* Witness or exhibit lists may be amended subsequent to the prehearing conference within the time limits established by the presiding officer at the prehearing conference. Any such amendments must be served on all parties.

**4.27(3)** In addition to the requirements of subrule 4.27(2), the parties at a prehearing conference may:

*a.* Enter into stipulations of law or fact;

*b.* Enter into stipulations on the admissibility of exhibits;

*c.* Identify matters which the parties intend to request be officially noticed;

*d.* Enter into stipulations for waiver of any provision of law; and

*e.* Consider any additional matters which will expedite the hearing.

**4.27(4)** Prehearing conferences shall be conducted by telephone unless otherwise ordered. Parties shall exchange and receive witness and exhibit lists in advance of a telephone prehearing conference.

**655—4.28(17A) Continuances.** The executive director shall have the authority to grant a continuance after consultation, if needed, with the chairperson of the board.

A request for continuance of a contested case matter must be submitted in writing to the board not later than seven days prior to the scheduled date of the hearing. Exceptions shall be granted at the discretion of the executive director only in situations involving extenuating, extraordinary, or emergency circumstances.

**655—4.29(17A) Hearing procedures.**

**4.29(1)** The presiding officer presides at the hearing and may rule on motions, require briefs, issue a decision, and issue such orders and rulings as will ensure the orderly conduct of the proceedings.

**4.29(2)** All objections shall be timely made and stated on the record.

**4.29(3)** Parties have the right to participate or be represented in all hearings or prehearing conferences related to their case. Any party may be represented by an attorney or another person authorized by law.

**4.29(4)** Subject to terms and conditions prescribed by the presiding officer, parties have the right to introduce evidence on issues of material fact, cross-examine witnesses present at the hearing as necessary for a full and true disclosure of the facts, present evidence in rebuttal, and submit briefs and engage in oral argument.

**4.29(5)** The presiding officer shall maintain the decorum of the hearing and may refuse to admit or may expel anyone whose conduct is disorderly.

**4.29(6)** Witnesses may be sequestered during the hearing.

**4.29(7)** The presiding officer shall conduct the hearing in the following manner:

*a.* The presiding officer shall give an opening statement briefly describing the nature of the proceedings;

*b.* The parties shall be given an opportunity to present opening statements;

*c.* Parties shall present their cases in the sequence determined by the presiding officer;

*d.* Each witness shall be sworn or affirmed by the presiding officer or the court reporter, and be subject to examination and cross-examination. The presiding officer may limit questioning in a manner consistent with law;

*e.* When all parties and witnesses have been heard, parties may be given the opportunity to present final arguments.

#### **655—4.30(17A) Evidence.**

**4.30(1)** The presiding officer shall rule on admissibility of evidence and may, where appropriate, take official notice of facts in accordance with all applicable requirements of law.

**4.30(2)** Stipulation of facts is encouraged. The presiding officer may make a decision based on stipulated facts.

**4.30(3)** Evidence in the proceeding shall be confined to those issues to which the parties received notice prior to the hearing, unless the parties waive their right to such notice or the presiding officer determines that good cause justifies expansion of the issues. If the presiding officer decides to admit evidence on issues outside the scope of the notice over the objection of a party who did not have actual notice of those issues, that party, upon timely request, shall receive a continuance sufficient to amend pleadings and to prepare on the additional issue.

**4.30(4)** The party seeking admission of an exhibit must provide opposing parties with an opportunity to examine the exhibit prior to the ruling on its admissibility. Copies of documents should normally be provided to opposing parties.

**4.30(5)** Any party may object to specific evidence or may request limits on scope of any examination or cross-examination. Such an objection shall be accompanied by a brief statement of the grounds upon which it is based. The objection, the ruling on the objection, and the reasons for the ruling shall be noted in the record. The presiding officer may rule on the objection at the time it is made or may reserve a ruling until the written decision.

**4.30(6)** Whenever evidence is ruled inadmissible, the party offering that evidence may submit an offer of proof on the record. The party making the offer of proof for excluded oral testimony shall briefly summarize the testimony or, with permission of the presiding officer, present the testimony. If the excluded evidence consists of a document or exhibit, it shall be marked as part of an order of proof and inserted in the record.

#### **655—4.31(17A) Default.**

**4.31(1)** If a party fails to appear or participate in a contested case proceeding after proper service of notice, the presiding officer may, if no adjournment is granted, enter a default decision or proceed with the hearing and render a decision in the absence of the party.

**4.31(2)** Where appropriate and not contrary to law, any party may move for default against a party who has requested the contested case proceeding and has failed to file a required pleading or has failed to appear after proper service.

**4.31(3)** Default decisions or decisions rendered on the merits after a party has failed to appear or participate in a contested case proceeding become final agency action unless, within 15 days after the date of notification or mailing of the decision, a motion to vacate is filed and served on all parties or an appeal of a decision on the merits is timely initiated within the time provided by rule 4.36(17A). A motion to vacate must state all facts relied upon by the moving party which establish that good cause existed for that party's failure to appear or participate at the contested case proceeding. Each fact so stated must be substantiated by at least one sworn affidavit or a person with personal knowledge of each such fact attached to the motion.

**4.31(4)** The time for further appeal of a decision for which a timely motion to vacate has been filed is stayed pending a decision on the motion to vacate.

**4.31(5)** Properly substantiated and timely filed motions to vacate shall be granted only for good cause shown. The burden of proof as to good cause is on the moving party. Adverse parties shall have ten days to respond to a motion to vacate. Adverse parties shall be allowed to conduct discovery as to the issue of good cause and to present evidence on the issue prior to a decision on the motion, if a request to do so is included in that party's response.

**4.31(6)** "Good cause" for purposes of this rule shall have the same meaning as "good cause" for setting aside a default judgment under Iowa Rule of Civil Procedure 236.

**4.31(7)** A decision denying a motion to vacate is subject to further appeal within the time limit allowed for further appeal of a decision on the merits in the contested case proceeding. A decision granting a motion to vacate is subject to interlocutory appeal by the adverse party pursuant to rule 4.34(17A).

#### **655—4.32(17A) Ex parte communication.**

**4.32(1)** Prohibited communications. Unless required for the disposition of ex parte matters specifically authorized by statute, following issuance of the notice of hearing, there shall be no communication, directly or indirectly, between the presiding officer and any party or representative of any party or any other person with a direct or indirect interest in such case in connection with any issue of fact or law in the case, except upon notice and opportunity for all parties to participate. This does not prohibit persons jointly assigned such tasks from communicating with each other. Nothing in this provision is intended to preclude the presiding officer from communicating with members of the agency or seeking the advice or help of persons other than those with a personal interest in, or those engaged in personally investigating as defined in subrule 4.20(2), prosecuting, or advocating in, either the case under consideration or a pending factually related case involving the same parties, as long as those persons do not directly or indirectly communicate to the presiding officer any ex parte communications they have received of a type that the presiding officer would be prohibited from receiving or that furnish, augment, diminish, or modify the evidence in the record.

**4.32(2)** Prohibitions on ex parte communications commence with the issuance of the notice of hearing in a contested case and continue for as long as the case is pending.

**4.32(3)** Written, oral or other forms of communication are "ex parte" if made without notice and opportunity for all parties to participate.

**4.32(4)** To avoid prohibited ex parte communications, notice must be given in a manner reasonably calculated to give all parties a fair opportunity to participate. Notice of written communications shall be provided in compliance with rule 4.23(17A) and may be supplemented by telephone, facsimile, E-mail or other means of notification. Where permitted, oral communications may be initiated through telephone conference call, which includes all parties or their representatives.

**4.32(5)** Persons who jointly act as presiding officer in a pending contested case may communicate with each other without notice or opportunity for parties to participate.

**4.32(6)** The executive director or other persons may be present in deliberations or otherwise advise the presiding officer without notice or opportunity for parties to participate as long as they are not disqualified from participating in the making of a proposed or final decision under subrule 4.20(1) or other law and they comply with subrule 4.32(1).

**4.32(7)** Communications with the presiding officer involving scheduling or uncontested procedural matters do not require notice or opportunity for parties to participate. A party should notify other parties prior to initiating such contact with the presiding officer when feasible, and shall notify other parties when seeking to continue hearings or other deadlines pursuant to rule 4.29(17A).

**4.32(8)** Disclosure of prohibited communications. A presiding officer who received a prohibited ex parte communication during the pendency of a contested case must initially determine if the effect of the communication is so prejudicial that the presiding officer should be disqualified. If the presiding officer determines that disqualification is warranted, a copy of any prohibited written communication, all written responses to the communication, a written summary stating the substance of any prohibited oral or other communication not available in written form for disclosure, all responses made, and the identity of each person from whom the presiding officer received a prohibited ex parte communication shall be submitted for inclusion in the record under seal by protective order. If the presiding officer determines that disqualification is not warranted, such documents shall be submitted for inclusion in the record and served on all parties. Any party desiring to rebut the prohibited communication must be allowed the opportunity to do so upon written request filed within ten days after notice of the communication.

**4.32(9)** Promptly after being assigned to serve as presiding officer on a hearing panel, as a member of a full board hearing, on an intra-agency appeal, or other basis, a presiding officer shall disclose to all parties material factual information received through ex parte communication prior to such assignment, unless the factual information has already been or shortly will be disclosed pursuant to Iowa Code section 17A.13(2) or through discovery. Factual information contained in an investigative report or similar document need not be separately disclosed by the presiding officer as long as such documents have been or will shortly be provided to the parties.

**4.32(10)** The presiding officer may render a proposed or final decision imposing appropriate sanctions for violations of this rule including default, a decision against the offending party, censure, or suspension or revocation of the privilege to practice before the agency. Violation of ex parte communication prohibitions by agency personnel shall be reported to the board's executive director for possible sanctions including: censure, suspension, dismissal, or other disciplinary action.

**655—4.33(17A) Recording costs.** Upon request, the board of nursing shall provide a copy of the whole or any portion of the record at cost. The cost of preparing a copy of the record or of transcribing the hearing record shall be paid by the requesting party.

Parties who request that a hearing be recorded by certified shorthand reporters rather than by electronic means shall bear the cost of such recording, unless otherwise provided by law.

**655—4.34(17A) Final decision.** When the board presides over reception of the evidence at the hearing, its decision is a final decision.

**4.34(1)** When a panel of specialists presides over the reception of evidence at the hearing, the findings of fact shall be considered by the board at the earliest practicable time. The decision of the board is a final decision.

**4.34(2)** A final decision in a contested case proceeding shall be in writing and include findings of fact and conclusions of law, separately stated.

*a.* Findings of fact shall be accompanied by a concise and explicit statement of underlying facts supporting the findings.

*b.* The decision shall include an explanation of why the relevant evidence in the record supports each material finding of fact.

*c.* Conclusions of law shall be supported by cited authority or by a reasoned opinion.

**4.34(3)** The decision or order shall be promptly delivered to the parties in the manner provided by Iowa Code section 17A.12 as amended by 1998 Iowa Acts, chapter 1202.

**4.34(4)** The final decision is a public record pursuant to Iowa Code section 272C.6(4).

#### **655—4.35(17A) Appeals.**

**4.35(1)** *Appeal by party.* Any adversely affected party may appeal a final decision of the board to the district court within 30 days after issuance, in accordance with Iowa Code section 17A.19 as amended by 1998 Iowa Acts, chapter 1202.

**4.35(2)** *Review.* The board may initiate review of the decision or order on its own motion at any time within 30 days following the issuance of such a decision.

**4.35(3)** *Notice of appeal.* An appeal of a decision or order is initiated by filing a timely notice of appeal with the board. The notice of appeal must be signed by the appealing party or a representative of that party and contain a certificate of service. The notice shall specify:

*a.* The parties initiating the appeal;

*b.* The proposed decision or order appealed from;

*c.* The specific findings or conclusions to which exception is taken and any other exceptions to the decision or order;

*d.* The relief sought;

*e.* The grounds for relief.

**4.35(4)** *Requests to present additional evidence.* A party may request the taking of additional evidence only by establishing that the evidence is material, that good cause existed for the failure to present the evidence at the hearing, and that the party has not waived the right to present the evidence. A written request to present additional evidence must be filed with the notice of appeal or, by a non-appealing party, within 15 days of service of the notice of appeal. The board may remand a case to the presiding officer for further hearing or may itself preside at the taking of additional evidence.

**4.35(5)** *Scheduling.* The board of nursing shall issue a schedule for consideration of the appeal.

**4.35(6)** *Briefs and arguments.* Unless otherwise ordered, within 20 days of the notice of appeal or order for review, each appealing party may file exceptions and briefs. Within 20 days thereafter, any party may file a responsive brief. Briefs shall cite any applicable legal authority and specify relevant portions of the record in that proceeding. Written requests to present an oral argument shall be filed with the briefs.

The board may resolve the appeal on the briefs or provide an opportunity for oral argument. The board may shorten or extend the briefing period as appropriate.

#### **655—4.36(17A) Applications for rehearing.**

**4.36(1)** *By whom filed.* Any party to a contested case proceeding may file an application for rehearing from a final order.

**4.36(2)** *Content of application.* The application for rehearing shall state on whose behalf it is filed, the specific grounds for rehearing, and the relief sought. In addition, the application shall state whether the applicant desires reconsideration of all or part of the agency decision on the existing record and whether, on the basis of the grounds enumerated in subrule 4.36(4), the applicant requests an opportunity to submit additional evidence.

**4.36(3) *Time of filing.*** The application shall be filed with the board office within 20 days after issuance of the final decision.

**4.36(4) *Notice to other parties.*** A copy of the application shall be timely mailed by the applicant to all parties of record not joining therein. If the application does not contain a certificate of service, the board shall serve copies on all parties.

**4.36(5) *Disposition.*** Any application for a rehearing shall be deemed denied unless the agency grants the application within 20 days after its filing.

**655—4.37(17A) No factual dispute contested cases.** If the parties agree that no dispute of material fact exists as to a matter that would be a contested case if such a dispute of fact existed, the parties may present all relevant admissible evidence either by stipulation or otherwise as agreed by the parties, without necessity for the production of evidence at an evidentiary hearing. If such agreement is reached, a jointly submitted schedule detailing the method and timetable for submission of the record, briefs and oral argument should be submitted to the presiding officer for approval as soon as practicable.

**655—4.38(17A) Emergency adjudicative proceedings.**

**4.38(1) *Necessary emergency action.*** To the extent necessary to prevent or avoid immediate danger to the public health, safety, or welfare, the agency may issue a written order in compliance with Iowa Code section 17A.18 to suspend a license in whole or in part, order the cessation of any continuing activity, order affirmative action, or take other action within the jurisdiction of the agency by emergency adjudicative order. Before issuing an emergency adjudicative order the agency shall consider factors including, but not limited to, the following:

- a.* Whether there has been a sufficient factual investigation to ensure that the agency is proceeding on the basis of reliable information;
- b.* Whether the specific circumstances which pose immediate danger to the public health, safety or welfare have been identified and determined to be continuing;
- c.* Whether the person required to comply with the emergency adjudicative order may continue to engage in other activities without posing immediate danger to the public health, safety or welfare;
- d.* Whether imposition of monitoring requirements or other interim safeguards would be sufficient to protect the public health, safety or welfare; and
- e.* Whether the specific action contemplated by the agency is necessary to avoid the immediate danger.

**4.38(2) *Issuance.***

*a.* The written emergency adjudicative order shall be immediately delivered to persons who are required to comply with the order by utilizing one or more of the following procedures:

- (1) Personal delivery;
- (2) Certified mail, return receipt requested, to the last address on file with the agency;
- (3) Certified mail to the last address on file with the agency;
- (4) First-class mail to the last address on file with the agency; or
- (5) Fax. Fax may be used as the sole method of delivery if the person required to comply with the order has filed a written request that agency orders be sent by fax and has provided a fax number for that purpose.

*b.* To the degree practicable, the agency shall select the procedure for providing written notice that best ensures prompt, reliable delivery.

**4.38(3) *Oral notice.*** Unless the written emergency adjudicative order is provided by personal delivery on the same day that the order issues, the agency shall make reasonable immediate efforts to contact by telephone the persons who are required to comply with the order.

**4.38(4) *Completion of proceedings.*** Issuance of a written emergency adjudicative order shall include notification of the date on which agency proceedings are scheduled for completion. After issuance of an emergency adjudicative order, continuance of further agency proceedings to a later date will be granted only in compelling circumstances upon application in writing.

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code chapter 17A as amended by 1998 Iowa Acts, chapter 1202, and Iowa Code sections 147.55, 152.10, 272C.4, 272C.5, 272C.6, and 272C.9.

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